

THE LAW ON THE HEART, REALLY? Romans 2:12-29

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Greetings! Today we are going to be speak along the lines of Romans chapter 2 where Paul comes and talks about the wrath of God and uses the wrath of God in a powerful way to explain that everything is by faith and not by the works of the Law. Isn't that absolutely beautiful! To think that we can use what the Apostle Paul used... the wrath of God defined as the non-involvement of God in a person's life. If a person would want to live by his own power, which was the case of Adam and Eve, He demonstrates and shows and gives them over to live that way. Then Paul comes and he says, "Do you see that if you do not believe and trust God, you cannot live!" This death was evident in both Jew as well as Gentile and therefore, should Jesus conquer death, both Jew and Gentile are included. That is what Romans 1 and 2 is basically all about.

Now, before we get into the message for today, I would like to speak to you. Maybe you feel that you miss out if you don't understand the "depths" of the Scriptures. I want to bring peace to your heart and tell you that there is nothing more that I, or any person, can teach you, than the Gospel. The Gospel is defined as, that Jesus died, that He was buried (pointing to the fact that He was physically dead), and that He rose again and that He will return and so give the same resurrection to those who believe upon Him. If you believe that, you have reached the depths of understanding. You have reached the depths of the Gospel. Nothing can be added to you. If you believe that and you include yourself into that wherein your hope and the expectation from where you live is that this resurrected Jesus will and does rule in your life bringing forth His life into you by His doing whereby you are patiently waiting for Him to give you that eternal life, that bodily eternal life. Even if you die you have the hope that you will be raised. If that is what you believe I want to tell you, my friend, there is no person with a Doctorate degree or a theologian... not even the Apostle Paul, can teach you more... not even Jesus can teach you more. That is as deep as what it gets. That is the pivotal point of everything. That is what God has given us.

With that understanding, this is what I want to say in the first part here: If you understand that, if you know that, nothing can be added. Should a person not be able to convince you of anything else, nothing can be taken away from you. You've made it! That's it. That's how simple it is. It's not by works. It's by grace. Eternal life is not by my works. It is by God that has promised. He has promised from the beginning. He has proven it in raising Jesus from the dead. He's taken this man that He raised from the dead, appointed Him as Lord over all. As we believe and trust in Him, it is His job to manifest what God has promised from the beginning, which is eternal life, for all of us, in us. That's it! If you believe that, that's it.

We in the Church have the Bible and this Bible is the New Testament is a 200 something page document and there is a lot of things that is said in the New Testament. It is not even talking about the Old, and I mean over a 2,000 page book of the New and Old together. When we look at all of that and we say there are so many things that are written there and there's so many things that sounds as if it contradicts one another. Maybe it is not your cup of tea to study out all those things. What I have found as I have studied those things out, I've come to understand that they just confirm what I've just told you that the simple message is all there is.

And the beauty is, that as you understand all these scriptures, you see that from Genesis, from Moses, and the people that wrote Genesis into the understanding of the Mesopotamian and into the understanding of the people in the desert and the Law, moving into the major and minor prophets, moving into the manifestation of Jesus and the apostles that everything just says the same thing. That's all and as we see this very same thing in all these scriptures, it helps our subconscious mind to think that this truth was declared thousands of years before Christ. It was confirmed by David. It was seen in Abraham. It's the Gospel message is confirmed in Jonah and the flood. The Gospel message is confirmed in God saving Lot from destruction. The Gospel message is confirmed in the Ten Commandments wherein the Law and everything points to God giving us eternal life as a free gift. So, with that in mind, as we go into Romans chapter 2, I would like you to know that we are now going to simply seek for this truth in these passages. And we are going to find that if we read these passages in its context, that it is just pointing to this truth that I have just told you.

I want to just quickly summarize what I have said in our previous messages on Romans. It will be a summary of Romans 1:1 to Romans 2:11. This is what we basically conclude what Paul has said: The major point is that eternal life can only be accessed by belief in Jesus. The scripture where Paul points that out is in Romans 1:16-17 where he is saying that the just shall live by faith. The just shall have life by believing God for it is clear and it is quite evident that the wrath of God is revealed to people and in people who did not believe in God but try to live by their own power and then Paul had Adam and Eve in mind. Can you see how Romans 1:1-18 is a long writing with a lot of information but the crux of the matter is the simple Gospel. That is it. It is very nice to see the simple Gospel in all these verses. Like I said, it confirms our heart.

The second point is that this message, that you can only have life by faith in God and then, what Paul has in the back of his mind here, in Jesus, honoring the Son as we honor the Father. This is true for Jew as well as Gentile. That is what Paul was having in mind. So, what is the true Gospel? Jesus died and He rose again and after His resurrection, we have the hope of the resurrection. That is what Paul said in point one. Then we quickly mentioned what the Gospel, the depths of everything. And then Paul goes on and further establishes this point in saying, that this is true for both Jew and Gentile. Now what he goes on into from saying it is true for both Jew and Gentile, that you will be saved, be you Jew or Gentile, by simply believing Jesus.

He now goes on from verse 19 up to, I would basically say, the end of chapter 7 going into 8 proving that point that this is true for both Jew and Gentile and that the Jewish people are not exempt from the wrath of God, or they cannot be saved from death by the fact that they have the Law. Last week I said it this way and I want to elaborate a little on it. If you are a police officer, the fact that you are a police officer does not set you free from having a desire to drive fast.

If you are a person that was speeding and you loved speeding, and then you go and study and become a police officer. The moment you become a police officer, that law, that you now have the power to enforce, or the fact that the law was now given to you to show to all people who are sinners, that law cannot set you free from speeding. You would still want to speed. That is what Paul is basically saying when we get to the whole thing about the Jews in the fifth point I have there in the notes. It is that having the Law cannot deliver you from death. Only faith in Jesus can!

What is Paul saying? What are we summarizing in Romans 1:1 to Romans 2:11? We are saying that Paul says that the Gospel is the Good News and the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. And that is for the Jew and the Gentile for the Scripture says that the only way whereby we can have life is by faith in Him for it is very evident that when people, Adam and Eve, did not have faith in Him, that death came to all be they Jew or Gentile. People are dying Then he is immediately thinking in his mind that if he has an opponent standing against him as a Jew that they will immediately say, "Yes, but we Jews are exempt because the Law was given to us and because we are physical Jews, Israel, descendants of Abraham, we have been given the Law. And since we now have the Law, we are exempt from this because we are the light to people. So, the kingdom belongs to us." Then Paul goes on and his argument in Chapter 2 is to the Jewish people saying to them, "Listen. I am also a Jew. As much as the Gentiles are rejecting God, in not believing in Him, you are rejecting God because God gave you the Law but you are not even doing the Law. That means that you are rejecting God. You are just as much without God as the Gentiles. Therefore, all people can only be saved by faith in Jesus." That is what he is saying.

With that in mind, let us go to Romans 2:12. (page 3 in our notes) When we get into this verse, we need to understand that Paul now has end time judgment in mind. He is trying to say that all people, who have not believe in Jesus, will perish. That is what he is trying to say. Before we read verse 12, put a bracket at verse 13 before the word, for, and then at the end of verse 15 after the word, another, because that should be read as within brackets. That means that we can basically read verse 12 and verse 16 as one verse to get the concept of what he is saying.

:12 For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law: but as many as have sinned within the law shall be judged by the law;

:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Let's read it again...

:12 For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without the law: and as many as have sinned with the law shall be judged by the law; :16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Let's read it again.... Let me put it in other words:

:12 For as many Gentiles, as what there were that did not have the physical Ten Commandments and the Law handed to them and have not believed in Jesus... or, even those who have received the Ten Commandments and the Law that had not believed in Jesus, they shall perish.

:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

So, what is Paul saying? Remember, Paul starts in Romans 1:18 and he is using the wrath of God, or perishing without God, without Jesus, as a concept. He is saying, "I want to prove to you that no person can live by his own works. The Scripture says that the just shall live by faith for the wrath of God, the promise of death that God gave if you not trust the only source of life, is evident in all those who took the truth which was that you could only live by God who gives it to you for free. Those who took these truths and suppressed it and didn't believe that but went over to become wise in their own eyes, (eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, referring now to Adam and Eve), we can see in their lives that they were perishing and dying. And that is true if the person is a Jew or a Gentile. It doesn't matter.

Speaking as Paul now, I want to say to everybody that thinks that you are exempt from this just because you have been given the Law, I've got news for you. Only the doers of the Law are just before God and can you do the Law? For I want to say to you that what the Law actually says is to believe upon Jesus because in the day of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ will judge, according to the Gospel. Those who have not had the physical Law and those who had the physical Law, according to this: Have they obeyed what the Law actually says which is to believe in God and not obey the commandments of the Law but just simply to trust God. That is what Paul is saying. It sounds very complicated but it is so simple. Paul uses wrath as the foundation of an argument to say that all people are included in the promise for God has promised eternal life to all those who cannot live by themselves.

When do you need a promise of eternal life? It is when you don't have it. That's when you need the promise. Paul comes and says, "Jews, you have the promise but the Gentiles also have the promise. Why? Because all are dying. It is evident that we can only live by faith, You, Jews, live by the Law but you are dying. The Gentiles live by the Law and their lives fall apart. So, I want to say to you that we are all in the same sinking ship and we all need a Savior. Therefore, let us all repent. Let the Gentiles repent of their idol worship and believe upon Jesus and let us as Jews repent and believe upon Jesus." That is what Paul is saying.

Sorry if this sounds a bit irritating but I want to read, once more, Romans 2:12 and 16 together.

:12 For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without law: and as many as have sinned within the law shall be judged by the law (This means that they will be judged as sinners and perish);

:16 (And this will happen) **In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.**

We are going to look at what secrets of men means and all those kinds of things that look at all God knows all my secrets and what I've done wrong and now Jesus is going to judge me in the last day. Now, that is not what that means. Remember, all that it's going to mean, in the end of the day, is the simple Gospel which is that Jesus died, He was buried, He was raised from the dead and those who believe in Him will have the resurrection. And there is a day when this resurrection is going to take place.

In the Bible when it says, "In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, it is all going to be in the day when God is going to give and bring judgment which is give eternal life to those who have believed upon Him. That is all. That's what it means so we are not going to deviate from the simple Gospel. We are just going to see how does the simple Gospel fit in here. **For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish...**

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Romans 2:12 For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without the law...

So what is he saying? If the Gentiles, that don't have the Ten Commandments, sin, what would sin be?

John 3:

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

18 He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned...

So what is sin? Sin is not to believe in Jesus. That's what he says. The Gentile that don't have the Law, if he does not believe in Jesus and that is it a free gift from God, he will die on account of not believing the truth which God preached to Adam and Eve which was, "By Me you can have eternal life as a free gift." That is what he is saying.

Then it says, **Romans 2:12 ... and as many as have sinned within the law shall be judged by the law...**

What is the work of the Law? What is the purpose of the Law? The Law was given so that sin might abound and according to chapter 3, which we will get into in the next few weeks. The Law is actually the message that you should believe in Jesus. That is it. So those who were given the physical Ten Commandments in the end they will then will also perish or be judged by this Law that was pointing them to Jesus. And if they sinned under the Law, it meant that the Law was pointing them to believe in Christ and now they refused to believe in Jesus. That is all that it is saying.

Paul explains why it is like this. He says, **verse 13 *For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.***

Justification, as a doer of the Law... how do we do the Law? How do I obey the Law? I obey the Law this way: The Law says: Believe in Jesus. The Bible says that Christ establishes the Law. It says that Jesus is the end of the Law for righteousness. So, if I believed in Jesus I have already fulfilled the Law even if I did not have a physical Law given to me as a Gentile. Even if I was a Jew or am a Jew under the Law when I believed in Jesus I have done what the Law said that I must do. The Law says that I must believe in Jesus. Jesus is the fulfillment or the fullness, the end goal, of the Law.

So, should I simply believe in Jesus, I need no law to point me to Christ anymore. That is why the Law is then fulfilled in Christ and I have believed upon Him. There is no need for a law for me at all! So here we see that it says, ***For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.***

A doer of the Law is one who believes in Jesus. (Romans 3:20)

:14 For when the Gentiles (nations), which have not the law, do by nature the things of the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

:15 Who shows the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while (between one another) accusing or else excusing one another;

Paul is simply saying, "Listen, if you hear the Law and you believe what the Law says, you will believe in Jesus and you will not sin." That's how you obey the Law. But the Gentile who don't have this physical Law, this is how I am going to answer their case. If they don't have a physical Law but some of them have believed upon Jesus, the life that comes forth on account of belief in Jesus will testify that belief in Jesus saves and gives life. That, then, will be a message that points other people to believe in Jesus. That is why they are a Law unto themselves. Their own lives are showing you need to believe in Jesus for by nature, the new nature, we are a new creation. We can read that in 2Peter 1:4. We have a divine nature. If they by nature do the things commanded in the Law, in other words, what was the Law saying?

The Law was saying, "Don't hate your neighbor. Don't do all these things." You cannot do this by your own power. Rather, believe upon Jesus for life.

If they have believed upon Jesus and now the things of the Law which is to love your neighbor and do no harm to him, is now inside them and we start to see what Paul calls the first fruit of the Spirit inside them. Then being conscious of the life that is a free gift is now also a Law to the other Gentiles pointing the other Gentiles to have faith in Jesus and not to live by their works. As what the Law of Moses pointed people not to have faith in their own works but faith in Jesus Christ. That is what he says and then in verse 16 ***In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men*** (Which is what they believed in their heart) ***by Jesus Christ according to my gospel***. He is saying is this: In the last day, according to the Good News that Jesus was raised from the dead, those who have believed upon Jesus, who have obeyed the Law, be the Law manifested as Ten Commandments and the Old Testament ordinances pointing you to believe in Jesus or be the Law, Gentiles that have believed in the Gospel and now have a life born from the Gospel as pointing people to believe in Jesus.... Be the Law in any of those two forms, that in the day when Jesus Christ comes all people will be judged or be treated according to Jesus as these laws have pointed them to Christ, to either to have resurrection life or not. That is what it is. That is the simplicity of this whole thing.

I am not going to hammer on that any more. If you want to understand it more, go and read that passage fifteen times, get familiarized with the verses and the concepts there and then listen to what I have just said in the previous 10-15 minutes for three or four times and have your heart open up and I'm sure you will just see how simple it is. I don't say that because I think you cannot understand. That is what I went through to basically get into this.

:17 Behold, you are called a Jew (Now he basically tells the Jewish people that you cannot find your life as a Jew in the fact that you have the Law given to you as a Jew and think you are going to be saved by that. It cannot save you as I've explained about the police officer.)

:17 Behold, you are called a Jew and you rest in the law, and boast in God,
:18 And know His will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;
:19 And persuade yourselves (Listen, they persuade themselves to be) ***a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness,***
:20 An instructor to the foolish, a teacher of babes, who have the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.
:21 Therefore the one teaching another, do you not teach yourself? The one preaching not to steal, do you steal?
:22 The one saying not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? The one that abhors idols, do you rob temples?
:23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

You must now see what is happening here. Paul, in a rhetorical way, is addressing, basically, the Jew inside himself asking Jewish questions in his own argument.

Many times I do that myself. We have some large windows in our studio and as I am preaching now, it is all closed and sealed off so we only have the light inside here. But, during the day as I go through my message, I will stand here on the stage and I will preach the message, actually reasoning with myself. I will take Romans and I will read it out loud. As I read this out loud, I will reason that out, speak it out loud here and I was thinking I don't know what somebody, that walks past here, would think seeing me going on like that. But, as I preach now, as loud as I preach now, as I'm doing it now, I will do it. And then in my mind there will come a counter argument and then I will argue with myself with that thought. I will address that thought and I will say, "Well, you might say...." When I'm talking like that, my wife always comes to me and she says to me, "To whom are you speaking and what is the argument?" That is exactly what Paul is busy with here in Romans. He is first saying, "Well, you guys think you have the physical Law." Because that is how he would have answered if he was a Jew and somebody would have preached it to him. That's how he would have answered it.

And now the next thing is, "Well, just let me just continue to address this thing with the Jews. You think that you have the Law. You boast that you know God and that is a key there. You say that the Gentiles don't have God but the Jews have God. You say that they don't honor God but you as a Jew, you honor God. But, let me take it a bit further. You say that you have God and you say that God gave you the Law. You say that the Gentiles are dishonoring God by not believing in Him but are you not dishonoring God by not doing His Law?" Can you see Paul's argument there? He has an opponent in his mind that he is addressing and he is answering him in this way. And we understand it that way because otherwise we're going to use these verses in such a complex way that we are going to reason away from the simple Gospel and we don't want that.

It goes on and says:

:21 Therefore the one teaching another, do you not teach yourself? The one preaching not to steal, do you steal?

:22 The one saying not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? The one that detesting idols, do you rob temples?

:23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? (Then he throws in a scripture:)

:24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

:25 For circumcision truly profits if you keep the law

So what is actually saying there is, "Listen Jews. It is good if you circumcised but you have to continue to honor God. You cannot now live in dishonor, dishonoring God. Well, I am now a Jew and I say, "Thank you. The promises are to me. I get circumcised in the flesh. Hallelujah!" And from that day on, you dishonor God by not doing His Law. He's not trying to explain a principle about trying to be saved by works here. He is simply trying to tell the Jews, "You are dishonoring God. You are not believing in God if you make your boast in the flesh." That is what he is saying.

They think that they are honoring God through the Law but if your concept is , “I honor God by doing the Law”, and you don’t do it in one point, you are actually saying, “I’m making a disgrace of God and I am not honoring Him.” That would be, in this argument here as good as unbelief in God.

He says,

:25 For circumcision truly profits if you keep the law; but if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.

:26 Therefore, if then the uncircumcision keeps the ordinances of the Law, (requirements of the law), shall not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

So can you see how he’s saying and he is trying to point out that the Gentile that believes in Jesus, who start to bear the fruit of the Spirit on account of the life of God, how can you exclude him from salvation and think that you are special just because of your ethnicity?

:27 And the uncircumcised which is by nature, if it fulfills the Law (which is to believe in Jesus and have the fruit of the Spirit in him on account of belief in Jesus), shall it not judge you, who through the letter and circumcision become transgressors of the Law?

He is saying, “Listen, if you are not obeying the Law, physically, you are not keeping everything, you are not keeping those Commandments, you live in adultery and fornication and in all those kinds of things, you are loving your neighbor, you think you are special people and so forth. If that is you and then someone else who doesn’t have the Law but have believed on Jesus and Jesus starts to bring forth fruit in him, shall he not be the one who teaches you because you are not even honoring God? You are dishonoring God. This Gentile, who is believing in Jesus, has what your Law says you should have... love and peace and kindness. If he starts to bring that forth in his life on account of God giving that life to him, don’t you think he will be your teacher?” That is what he is saying.

He is not trying to say that you must have these good works to be saved. He’s trying to explain that belief in Jesus is the only way wherein you can be saved. And he is using an argument against a very intellectual Jew that would say, “Well, we have the Law!” And he’s out arguing him or defeating him in his questions and saying, “Listen, I want to say to you, even if you have the Law, even if you cannot do all the Commandments of the Law, then you have dishonored God. But, if a person, who does not have the Law, that is not circumcised, can do the things that you say that one should be done which you cannot do, don’t you think that he is a bit further than you?” This should not be taken and preached in the Church all the time. It should be preached that this is actually not written for the whole Church. It is written for an intellectual Jewish person that refuses to believe in Jesus, He has an argument that says, “I am special because I am a Jew and I have the Law.” That who it was written to in its context.

Then it goes on...

:27 And the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfills the Law (which is belief in Jesus and fruit from there), **shall it not judge you, who through the letter and circumcision become transgressors of the Law?** If you don't believe in Jesus and it's got the fruit of the flesh.

:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

:29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart (in the secret place), **in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God.**

Oh, my goodness... that's another twenty minutes to explain verse 29 but let us just try and see what we can do.

Remember in *verse 16* it says that **God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.**" The secrets of men is basically, judging means to bring forth what is happening in the secret place of man. The secret place of man to the Jews was no secret that they were physically circumcised and thereby they were the people of God. It was no secret but the Gentiles who believed upon Jesus was actually secret Jews. Why? Because they were also circumcised but not where everybody can know that they are Jews. They were circumcised in heart. How would they be circumcised in heart? They were circumcised in heart by believing something else. They were believing that Jesus will give them eternal life from where they will have life.

This is a point I quickly want to make here: When it talks about judge the secrets of men, it talks about bringing forth what is believed.

And we close with this second point: It says that circumcision is of the heart, In the Spirit and not in the letter. What does it mean? Physical flesh is not cut off by true understanding of the Law but, having the life of God, of the Holy Spirit, being given as a source of life and then the life of the flesh, which means living by your works, cut off as a source of life. So, that is what a true Jew is. . .

The spiritual interpretation of the LAW is an interpretation where the law points to the Spirit of God as the only source of life where it amounts to a NEW NATURE.

2Cor. 3:6 Who also had made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Glory to God!

We will pick it up from there next week. I trust that his compact teaching that has, what I've shared as simply as possible, the understanding of, "We can only be saved by believing in Jesus and not our own works."

In these passages where Paul was actually addressing counter arguments to his point that he was making wherein he, in a very intellectual way, was addressing a Jewish opponent which could have just been imaginary. He was addressing him and so addressing any Jew that would come up with that argument and it was like a pre-treating or a pre-answer to people that might even have had that question in their minds.

We conclude with: We can only be saved by Grace through faith, in belief in Jesus Christ. That both Jew and Gentile are in the same sinking ship and that they can only believe in Jesus Christ. That the Jew cannot boast in the fact that he has the Law and the Gentile who has believed upon Jesus Christ and has a life born from Jesus Christ is already a message in himself to all other Gentiles doing the same work as the Law pointing to others: Listen the life you have is not of the highest quality. Believe in Jesus, thereby you will have life. That is what he is saying all the time. Glory to God!

Next week we are going to jump into chapter 3 which is just repetitive of the first two chapters and a little bit more meat added to that.

Let me end this off with prayer:

Father, I want to thank You that I can stretch forth my hand and in my heart I am doing this towards everybody that is watching. Thank You, Lord, that You love all people and that life is theirs, understanding is theirs and the power of the Resurrection manifests in them as they are a law unto all which is a message saying, "Not by your works but only by grace. Amen and amen